

The Design *Charrette*: An Innovative Service-Learning Course in Community Planning and Urban Design HIPR 6680/4680

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This service-learning course provides students with a real-world opportunity to work side-by-side with faculty and stakeholders to address community design through a multi-day collaborative planning event called a charrette. Each charrette will be a 2-4-day experience in a small Georgia town, coastal community, watershed, corridor, or a neighborhood in an urban area.

Charrettes emphasize collaboration, multi-disciplinary work, compressed work sessions, stakeholder input, and regular feedback loops. Students will learn facilitation and presentation skills, employ smart growth principles, use design to achieve a shared vision, and learn to solve complex problems in a compressed time period. Students will learn how to summarize charrette results and produce a professional report from their findings. The course will require quick work and group decision making. Students will need to be unafraid of new ideas. Students will interact with the public and be representatives of UGA and the College of Environment and Design.

All students will be required to conduct pre-charrette preparation and orientation, full charrette participation in 2 charrettes sponsored by or approved through the course instructor. Students will also be involved in learning new techniques for post-charrette product refinement, as all students will be involved in post-charrette final document production.

Graduate students taking the charrette course will conduct additional pre- and post-charrette work. Prior to the charrette, this may include inventory and analysis to provide accurate base maps for the field work, building counts, zoning classifications and/or natural and cultural resource distribution. Follow-up work from the charrette may include: PowerPoint presentations; written and printed report production using Adobe Creative Suite Programs; scanning, laminating and mounting drawings; booklet making; model building; and map manipulation.

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“Charrette” – a design workshop that involves rapid, intensive, and creative work sessions, usually lasting several days, in which a design team focuses on a particular problem and arrives at a collaborative solution.



SAPELO ISLAND, GA



LOCUST GROVE, GA



COVINGTON, GA



AUGUSTA, GA



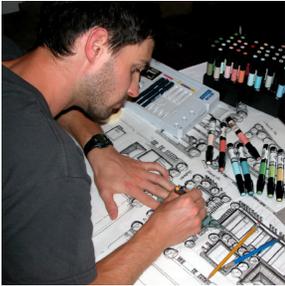
Charrette is a design workshop that involves rapid, intensive, and creative work sessions, usually lasting several days, in which a design team focuses on a particular problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. *Charrettes* are product-oriented. The public *charrette* is fast becoming a preferred way to face the planning challenges confronting American cities.

The University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design has been using the *charrette* process to help communities for many decades. *Charrette* teams usually range in size from 15 - 25 participants and include members of the charrette course HIPR 4680/6680, as well as additional students and faculty. As part of the College of Environment and Design, our core Team comes from the disciplines of Landscape Architecture, Historic Preservation and Environmental Planning, but we often draw on the greater UGA community and other disciplines.

The format of individual *charrettes* remains flexible to satisfy unique community needs and to respond to the local strength and opportunities. *Charrettes* can result in a wide array of final products, such as:

- Conceptual community master plans
- Design guidelines
- Building typology and facade recommendations
- Roadway and corridor planning recommendations
- Open space & recreation master plan concepts
- Downtown revitalization strategies
- Environmental management guiding principles

Our *charrettes* are high-energy, new vision, community improvement events! They result in concepts that leverage implementation funds. Nearly all of the communities where *charrettes* were done have gone on to receive grants or local funds to implement our recommendations. In short, *charrettes* WORK!



What is Service-Learning?

Academic service-learning is a method of teaching and learning which integrates relevant community service with academic coursework to enhance learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

If school students collect trash out of an urban streambed, they are providing a service to the community as volunteers; a service that is highly valued and important. On the other hand, when school students collect trash from an urban streambed, then analyze what they found and possible sources so they can share the results with residents of the neighborhood along with suggestions for reducing pollution, they are engaging in service-learning.

To learn more, visit the UGA Office of Service-Learning at: <http://www.servicelearning.uga.edu/blog/>

Web resources

CCDP past charrette reports

www.ced.uga.edu/services_outreach/design-charrettes

National Charrette Institute

www.charretteinstitute.org

Charrette Center, Incorporated

www.charrettecenter.net





Frequently Asked Questions by students

Can first-year/non-CED students participate in a charrette?

Yes! We have had all years and disciplines of students participate in charrettes on a regular basis. Good skillsets to have are being able to play well with others—as large group and small group consensus needs to happen quick and often—and be flexible, dedicated, and have a good attitude. Academically, everyone has different skillsets and ideas that are beneficial in an open design process like a charrette. It may be drawing, historic building knowledge, GIS, or native plants expertise, OR it may be writing, public speaking, working with kids, speaking Spanish or another life experience! If you love a challenge, can think on your feet, and have not lost your sense of fun, then you are a good candidate for a charrette team member!

But, I have no charrette/drawing/historic building/landscape experience?!

No problem! The BLAs, MLAs and MEPDs learn about historic architectural styles and significant features. The MHPs and MEPDs learn how to draw in plan view. And the MEPDs teach us how to be organized and pull it all together! And non-CED students learn design and teach us their best practices. You will learn from each other as much or more than you will learn from the facilitators (Pratt and Jennifer)! Each charrette is different, but the rhythms and verses are very similar.

Will I need to be excused from classes/studio/work during the charrette?

Yes. One of the reasons charrettes are successful planning tools is because team members dedicate the full time period to the design problem at hand. Therefore full participation is required – you will need to be excused from classes and work to participate. As for making up time in studio, that is completely up to you. There will not be “free time” during the 3-day charrette to work on other projects. We begin in the morning at breakfast and work late. Depending on what the group is feeling, we may work until only 8pm, or up until midnight.

Will I need to provide my own supplies, food, lodging and/or transportation?

No. We have all supplies needed for a mobile studio, and the host community provides for all meals (including vegetarian options) snacks and lodging. We will travel in UGA vehicles to and from the charrette site.

What are the benefits to participating in a charrette?

It is organized chaos, but it is an extremely valuable learning experience. It is real work with real expectations, and our community clients are extremely impressed with the quality of charrette results. It is a great experience and great portfolio material.

What do other students think about the charrette experience?

Here's a sampler of recent student feedback, when asked what they would share with other students interested in charrettes:

You learn more in three days than a year of studio class.

Be flexible!

I find it very beneficial to work with other disciplines because we each have a very different knowledge base which makes for better end products in my opinion.

As students, we often do not get a lot of opportunities to work with professionals and out in the community and the CED gives us that opportunity with the charrette course.

Charrettes are a great way to earn real-world experience... a charrette is fast-paced and that a lot of things will go over your head... it is impossible to keep up with what the other teams are discovering and investigating, but if all goes according to plan, it will all fit together when the product is finished and polished.

I think it is a great opportunity to broaden your experience and exposure to different aspects of the field.

